SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

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CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION

Answering Australian journalist W. Burchett, President Nguyen Huu Tho stresses:

For a stable and lasting peace, freedom, democracy and national concord must be achieved in South Viet Nam

After the signing of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam President Nguyen Huu Tho of the Presidium of the NFL CC and President of the RSVN PRG Council of Advisers was interviewed by Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett.

Following are President Nguyen Huu Tho's answers run by the American paper Guardian, *and the magazine* Afric-Asia *published in France:*

Question: Mr Chairman, please give us your assessment of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam. Kindly tell us how one should view the accord in the light of the basic objectives of the National Front for Liberation and of the platform of the Republic of South Viet Nam Provisional Revolutionary Government.

Answer: The Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam is a signal victory of the resistance of the South Vietnamese and of the Vietnamese people as a whole. It has recorded the US pledge to respect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Viet Nam and the right to self-determination of the Vietnamese, stop the aggressive war against both zone of Viet Nam, terminate US military involvement and intervention in South Viet Nam's internal affairs, recognize the simultaneous existence of two regimes, two armies, two zones under separate control and three political forces in South Viet Nam and the South Vietnamese people's right to shape their own political future by means of genuinely free and democratic elections.

The accord is the crowning of more than 18 years of grim struggle, untold sacrifices and unbelievable hardships experienced by the South Vietnamese under the sound leadership of the National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government, their only genuine representative. It is also the outcome of the most gruelling but most glorious resistance of the people of both zones against foreign aggression.

Our achievement cannot be dissociated from the monolithic solidarity of the three Indochinese peoples in their confrontation with a common enemy, and from the sympathy and support of the peace, independence- and freedom-loving people of the world and of the US progressives as well. It is a major contribution to the world peoples' revolutionary movement for national independence, democracy and social progress.

It supplies an eloquent illustration that in our times, a nation with a medium-size area and population can successfully resist any aggressor, if it has a sound revolutionary line, is able to unite its whole people and enlist international solidarity and is inspired with a single purpose. With the signing of the cease-fire arrangements the South Vietnamese people's revolutionary cause has switched over to a new highly auspicious stage. The accord provides firm political and juridical foundations, a sharp weapon for them to carry on their battle for the consolidation of peace, achievement of genuine independence and freedom and attainment of their basic objective which is a peaceful, independent, neutral, democratic and prosperous South Viet Nam and eventual national reunification.

Question: What are the main tasks of the NFL RSVN and PRG after the signing of the Agreement?

Answer: The current fight of the South Vietnamese people though enjoying basic facilities is still a complicated and fierce one. Reactionary, militarist and fascist forces under foreign sway are nurturing many dark designs against peace, independence, democracy and national concord. The NFL and PRG are striving to lead and galvanize the South Vietnamese people and armed forces to strengthen and broaden the national united bloc, uphold the peace, independence, democracy and national concord standard, struggle for the preservation of peace, achievement of genuine independence and sovereignty, democratic freedoms, better living conditions, strict implementation of the provisions of the Agreement signed. Our most immediate job is to force the US and Saigon regime to put a final end to their serious violations of the cease-fire since it came into force.

There cannot be a lasting and stable peace in South Viet Nam short of democratic freedoms and national concord, which the NFL and RPG have many times asserted as a line consistent with the present conjuncture and with the wishes and aspirations of all segments of the South Vietnamese having deep at heart peace, independence, democracy, prosperity and happiness. It is a basic and long-term policy aimed at removing all feuds, ending all discrimination, promoting the sense of solidarity and mutual love so that everyone can address himself to the healing of the wounds of war and national reconstruction. It will make it possible for Vietnamese at home and abroad who had not the opportunity to take part in the resistance war for national salvation to do their bits in the common effort of the Nation. The NFL and PRG warmly welcome, and readily cooperate with, all, irrespective of political and religious conviction, and of past records, provided that they are now for peace, independence, democracy, and national concord.

It was in this spirit that immediately after the signing of the cease-fire, the NFL and PRG called on the Saigon administration to convene at an early date the conference of the two South Vietnamese parties to discuss a settlement of South Viet Nam's internal affairs, first and foremost the achievement of national concord and enforcement of democratic freedoms, formation of National Council of Reconciliation and National Concord with tripartite equal membership at all levels.

Externally, the PRG is resolved to maintain and expand friendly relations with all the countries having established diplomatic ties with it and prepared to set up similar connections with other countries on the basis of respect for each other's independence and sovereignty and of equality and mutual benefit.

Question: Do you anticipate any difficulties in the implementation of the Agreement?

Answer: Since the Agreement came into effect, the PRG and the DRVN Government have strictly abided by all its provisions as well as all its Protocols. But the Saigon administration and the US reversely have not ceased violating them. With US aiding and abetting the former has deliberately created a tension in South Viet Nam, mounted all over South Viet Nam large scale military operations to encroach on our areas, to crack down on, and terrorize, the people. It has been striving to consolidate its fascist rule and to strengthen its army and police and issuing emergency laws to suppress democratic freedoms. With crude methods, it has hampering the activity of the Four Party Joint Military Commission and of the International Commission of Control and Supervision. It has not correctly complied with the stipulations of the Agreement on the return of captured military and civilian personnel. As for the US, it has behaved in the same way, in connection with the withdrawal of its troops and dismantlement of its bases.

With such breaches of their pledges, the US and Saigon Administrations have exposed their objectionable scheme to maintain neo-colonialism in South Viet Nam, to keep the Vietnamese nation divided and the Vietnamese land partitioned for long. They must bear the full blame for all difficulties and obstacles to the implementation of the cease-fire.

(Continued on page 7)

US-Saigon violations Condemned

US illegal introduction of weapons and war means into South Viet Nam

At a recent meeting of the head delegates to the Central Four-Party Joint Military Commission in Saigon, Lieutenant-General Tran Van Tra, Head of the Military Delegation of the RSVN PRG, rejected the groundless charges made by the US and the Saigon administration against the RSVN PRG, and pointed out that it was the US and the Saigon administration that are illegally bringing war means from US bases in Japan to Da Nang.

He said that according to the Agreement and the related Protocol the two South Vietnamese parties may replace armaments, munitions and war materials after having agreed on points of entry and modalities, which replacement must be put under the supervision of the Two-Party JMC. In this spirit, the introduction of weapons made by the US and the RVN without such agreements is an illegal act taken by stealth in violation of the Agreement and the related Protocol.

The RSVN head delegate energetically protested against this violation, and demanded that the US take all these weapons and war means away immediately, and, pending agreements, refrain from any other replacement of this kind.

Saigon administration's nibbling operation against Tong Le Chan and Rach Bap areas

ON March 22, the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam issued a statement vehemently derouncing the Saigon administration for conducting a large nibbling operation against Tong Le Chan and Rach Bap areas.

The statement said :

"Righ after the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam entered into force, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam has done its utmost to strictly implement all the provisions of the Agreement and its Protocols. But the Saigon administration, on order from the United States, has conducted thousands of operations to nibble at areas under the control of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, especially the large-scale nibbling attacks on Sa Huynh and Duc Pho (Quang Ngai province), Cai Lay (My Tho province)...

Recently, the Saigon administration planned and prepared to launch a large-scale land-grabbing operation against U Minh Jungle area.

Following these serious violations of the ceasefire, on March 21, the Saigon command officially admitted that it was conducting an operation involving 6,000 troops backed by aircraft and artillery, against Tong Le Chan and Rach Bap areas (in Thu Dau Mot province) controlled for a long time now by the RSVN Provisional Revolutionary Government. This is a serious violation by the Saigon administration of Article 3 of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and Article 2 of the Protocol on the Ceasefire in South Viet Nam.

Meanwhile, the government of the United States officially admitted that it was illegally transporting weapons to South Viet Nam. At the March 22, 1973 session of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission, the US delegate put forward ambiguous pretexts to announce a halt to the withdrawal of US troops from South Viet Nam.

Obviously, the US government and the Saigon administration, in defiance of public opinion at home and in the world, have arrogantly admitted their gross violations of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, refused to end the war, instead continued US involvement in South Viet Nam. To cover up its dark scheme and arrogant acts, the United States cooked up a story about the so-called North's infiltration into South Viet Nam.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Viet Nam denounces before public opinion at home and in the world these grave acts of violation of the Agreement by the US government and the Saigon administration, demands that they end immediatly all nibbling operations, illegal transportation of arms into South Viet Nam and US military involvement in South Viet Nam, as stipulated by Article 4 of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam.

The implementation of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam is the responsibility of all the signatory parties. The people and Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam have seriously and scrupulously implemented all the provisions of the Agreement. But they are resolved not to tolerate whatever act of sabotage against the Agreement and peace by the US and the Saigon administration.

The US government and the Saigon administration must bear full responsibility for all serious consequences of their acts.

This violation by the Saigon administration was not — as asserted by the Saigon spokesman — the "second biggest operation," after Sa Huynh, launched so far by the Saigon army. The latter's violations amount to 46,180. In term of forces fielded, it was not the biggest military move. But it was very serious by its character. Thus, two months after the ceasefire came into force, the Saigon administration keeps conducting land-grabbing operations. It has gone the length of not waiting for the settlement of the case by the Four-Party JMC, while inventing a false pretext to announce its illegal act.

How will be the situation in South Viet Nam if the Saigon administration keeps violating the cease-fire by cooking up false charges? And how will one implement the Paris Agreement if these open violations are not checked and stopped in time?

This new and serious acts of the Saigon administration has clearly exposed the US-Saigon scheme. For nearly two months, Saigon troops continue nibbling operations, bombing and repressing the population. It is part and parcel of the US plan of maintaining conflicts after bloody "pacification" and providing its henchmen with a position of strength in order to use them as an instrument for the realization of neo-colonialism.

The PRG of the RSVN has more than once declared its correct implementation of the Agreement and displayed its good will, but is resolved to defend the liberated zone and the life and property of the population.

We strongly demand that the US and the Saigon administration strictly observe the cease-fire, end immediately all nibbling operations, order its troops to withdraw from all the liberated areas they have infiltrated into since the cease-fire order came into effect and return to the statu quo before January 28, 1973, refrain from any movement or relocation of troops, from any flight by fighter or any armed aircraft, as stipulated by the Protocol concerning the Ceasefire.

in the cities

— Bus drivers have of late staged continuous actions for better living conditions and democratic liberties, and criticized the Saigon administration's refusal to implement the Paris Agreement.

— Nearly 100 lorry and cyclocab drivers in My Tho city demanded that the Saigon administration take measures to prevent prices skyrocketing, and lower such taxes as licence and income tax. They denounced the Saigon administration's non-implementation of the Paris Agreement's provisions on the people's democratic freedoms and right to work for a living. They passed a resolution to be sent to Nguyen Van Thieu, Tran Thien Khiem and the Saigon Assembly, asking for satisfaction of their demands.

— More than 150 workers belonging to the Saigon — Phu Lam Lambretta Drivers' Trade Union held an extraordinary conference and adopted a resolution urging that the Saigon administration recognize their freedom to exercise their profession on the said road-section, and leave Lambretta and taxi drivers free to carry customers from the city to suburbs' bus stations.

— The Nha Trang railway workers' Trade Union met in an extraordinary session to denounce the Saigon administration's ill-treatment of 3,000 railway workers in Khanh Hoa province and Nha Trang town. They required from the authorities better living conditions, fixing of minimum wages to guarantee the workers a decent living, and increased family allowances.

— On March 8, 29 deputies of the "Social-Democratic Group" in the Saigon "Lower House" signed a joint statement flaying the Nguyen Van Thieu monopolistic dictatorial and corrupt regime as incompatible with the present situation in South Viet Nam. They pressed for "an end to the killing and acts of sabotage, the implementation of the ceasefire provisions, release of political detainees, defence of fundamental liberties and the right to self-determination."

— Within the first two weeks of March 1973, *Dien Tin* (Dispatch) was confiscated twice on flimsy grounds. Prior to that, on March 2, the Saigon administration had seized *Doc Lap* (Independence) and sentenced its director to one year of imprisonment with stay of execution, on charge that the paper had carried an article by a demobilized Saigon soldier complaining about the non-implementation of the Paris Agreement.

— On Feb. 27, thugs in Chau Thanh district, Ben Tre province, compelled members of revolutionaries' families to enter the liberated area and remove PRG flags. They pointed guns at the people and forced them to cross mine fields, thus causing the death of three women and wounding one child. Thousands of locals joined the victims' families in direct confrontations with the Saigon authorities to claim damages for the dead and punishment for the killers. On March 6, the victims' families accompanied by 800 peasants, workers and students within and without the town came to the houses of two Saigon "deputies" in Ben Tre to denounce the thugs' violation of the Paris Agreement and murder of members of revolutionaries' families, and urge those deputies to endorse a petition which was to be forwarded to the International Commission for Control and Supervision and the Four-Party Joint Military Commission.

Second meeting of the Consultative Conference between the two South Vietnamese parties in Paris

THE two South Vietnamese parties to the Consultative Conference in Paris met for the second time on March 22.

Minister Nguyen Van Hieu, head delegate of the RSVN PRG, again stressed the important task of the conference — to settle quickly the various internal affairs of South Viet Nam in accordance with the earnest desire of the South Vietnamese people.

He said that the basis for the settlement of these matters must be the principles and points included in the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, and the general spirit must be one of national reconciliation and concord, and mutual respect and mutual non-elimination. To act against this, he pointed out, will entail grave consequences.

Criticizing the Saigon administration for sticking to the policy of negating and eliminating the RSVN PRG, he said :

" It is clear to everybody that the RSVN PRG was born and has grown up in the flames of the great patriotic war of resistance, and even the one and a half million foreign aggressor troops and your own troops, and the over ten million tons of bombs and shells have failed to destroy it. The PRG, on the contrary, has consolidated, and become stronger day after day, and has expanded its power on the territory of South Viet Nam, and enhanced its position in the world. As the genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people, it is playing a decisive role in the political life of South Viet Nam. No force can negate it, and any such scheme will only end in failure."

Minister Nguyen Van Hieu went on :

" Our stand concerning your administration has been clearly understood by the people at home and the whole world. We do not recognize your establishment, and we do not ask you to recognize ours. We consider the existence of the two administrations as a temporary situation, and hope that it will end soon. The South Vietnamese people, through the exercise of their democratic freedoms, the achievement of national reconciliation and concord, and the conduct of free and democratic elections, will set up a unique administration, and choose for themselves a regime on the basis of democracy. In the meantime, consultations must be held between the two South Vietnamese parties to settle all the internal affairs of South Viet Nam in the spirit of national reconciliation and concord, equality, mutual respect, and mutual non-elimination."

Refuting the demand for "North Vietnamese troop withdrawal," he said:

"You are rehashing what the US government once used as a pretext for its aggression in Viet Nam. It is known to everybody that during the four years of the Paris Conference on Viet Nam, the "North Vietnamese troops" matter raised by the US was one of the major obstacles to the work of the conference, that the four parties could finally sign the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam was due to the elimination of this obstacle. Now that you have raised a point which is not included in the Agreement, we, like all other persons of good will, cannot help wondering whether you are trying to impede the work of this conference."

He also made further clarification of the stand of the RSVN PRG on the agenda of the conference, and said:

" The three major political issues to be settled quickly now are the guarantee of democratic liberties and the achievement of national reconciliation and concord, the setting up of a council of national reconciliation and concord on a national scale and at lower levels, and the holding of general, free and democratic elections and local elections. These issues must be included in the agenda of the Consultative Conference of the two South Vietnamese parties."

Minister Nguyen Van Hieu urged the Saigon representatives to agree to this agenda so that the conference may deal at once with the essentials, and one may speedily carry out this provision of the Paris Agreement : " The two South Vietnamese parties shall sign an agreement on the internal matters of South Viet Nam as soon as possible, and do their utmost to accomplish this within ninety days after the ceasefire comes into effect, in keeping with the South Vietnamese people's aspirations for peace, independence and sovereignty. "

The Saigon representative, Nguyen Luu Vien, only tried to distort the Paris Agreement, and made awkward attempts to escape the firm criticism by the PRG's head delegate.

RECEPTION

On the occasion of the opening of the Consultative Conference in Paris between the two South Vietnamese parties, Minister Nguyen Van Hieu, Head of the RSVN PRG delegation, has given a reception in Paris, according to *GPA* correspondent in the French capital.

Nearly 600 guests attended the reception.

Attending were Minister Xuan Thuy, Head of the DRVN Government delegation to the Paris Conference on Viet Nam ; Minister Dang Viet Chau, Head of the DRVN delegation to the Conference of the DRVN-US Joint Economic Commission ; Nguyen Co Thach, DRVN Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ; Le Khac, Vice-Chairman of the Viet Nam State Planning Commission, member of the DRVN delegation ; and Vo Van Sung, General Delegate of the DRVN in France.

On the French side were Froment Maurice and Henri Bolle, respectively Head and Deputy Head of the Department for Asia and Australia of the Foreign Ministry ; De La Tour Dupin, acting Chief of Protocol and other officials of the French Foreign Ministry.

Ok Sakun, Head of the representation of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia, Ambassadors and Chargés d'affaires of the socialist countries and many non-aligned countries, the Indonesian Ambassador and the representative of the Canadian Embassy attended the reception. Thongsan Bodisan, Secretary General of the Union of the Lao Students in France, was present.

Raymond Guillot, André Vieuguet and Jacques Duclos, members of the Political Bureau, and many members of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party also attended.

Present were also André Souquière, Secretary General of the French Peace Movement, the representatives of the General Confederation of Labour, the Democratic Confederation of Workers and the 52 French organizations of solidarity with the Vietnamese people and many French personalities.

Many overseas Vietnamese including political figures, intellectuals, writers and artists and South Vietnamese of various political tendencies and religions were also invited, among them :

— Huynh Trung Dong, President of the Union of Vietnamese Residents in France, many members of that Union and representatives of organizations of intellectuals, etc.

— Bui Mong Hung, Vice-President, Le Kim Chi and Tran Hai Lac, general secretaries of the French branch of the United Association of Vietnamese Buddhists ; Nguyen Tung, general secretary of the Movement of Buddhist students in Europe ;

— Father Nguyen Dinh Thi and Nguyen Van Cong, President of the National Christian Movement.

— Ho Thong Minh and Nguyen Huu Chau, ex-Ministers of the Saigon administration and members of the " South Viet Nam Central Force in Paris, " Tran Huu The, ex-Minister, Dr Pham Van Huyen, ex-Minister ; Nguyen Manh Ha, ex-Minister, Co Van Hai, ex-President of the Saigon Assembly, Tran Van Khiem, Saigon ex-MP,

— Lieutnant Colonel Tran Dinh Lan, President of the Vietnamese Free Forces ; Lieutnant-Colonel Nguyen Van Chau. ex-Director of Ngo Dinh Diem's Psychowar Office ; Colonel Do Khac Mai, ex-General Commander of the Saigon Air Force, Colonel Nguyen Khuong and Colonel Vuong Van Dong ;

— Duong Van Duc, representative of General Duong Van Minh's Office abroad,

— Nguyen Thai Son (Socialist Party Unity abroad),

— Nguyen Van Con, representative of Saigon ex-Premier Tran Van Huu to the Peace and Renovation Committee,

— Lai Van Sang, ex-Director of Saigon Police.

On the side of the delegation of the delegation of the Saigon administration to the Consultative Conference were Nguyen Ngoc Huy, member, Tran Van Do, adviser, Nguyen Ngoc An, member and a number of experts.

The reception took place in a cordial and friendly atmosphere.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Minister Nguyen Van Hieu on the afternoon of March 19, 1973 held his first press conference at the International Conferences Center on Kléber Avenue, Paris, just after the first session of the Consultative Conference between the two South Vietnamese parties, according to our correspondent there.

The press conference was attended by many French, American, British, Japanese and other mediamen.

Minister Nguyen Van Hieu warmly welcomed newsmen of various countries who had persistently covered the Paris Conference on VietNam and made positive contribution to the victory of peace and justice in Viet Nam.

" Thanks to the goodwill and efforts of the RSVN Provisional Revolutionary Government, the Consultative Conference between the two South Vietnamese parties held its first session today to settle the internal affairs of South Viet Nam in a spirit of strict respect for the Paris Agreement and national reconciliation and concord, " Minister Nguyen Van Hieu said.

" The delegation of the RSVN Provisional Revolutionary Government will spare no efforts to help speedily bring success to this conference, so as to advance to the formation of the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord and the holding of genuinely free and democratic general elections across South Viet Nam, in response to the earnest aspirations and demands of the South Vietnamese people, " he affirmed.

Prof. Nguyen Van Hieu then fully answered all the questions put by newsmen. Replying to the one concerning the recent statements by President Nixon on the Viet Nam situation and in which he accused the PRG and the DRVN Government of violating the Paris Agreement, Minister Nguyen Van Hieu flatly refuted all those sheer fabrications and denounced them as a ploy to cover up violations of the peace agreement committed daily in South Viet Nam by the US and Saigon administration.

COURTESY VISIT

Minister Nguyen Van Hieu, head of the RSVN PRG's delegation on March 19 paid a courtesy visit to Mr André Betancourt, Foreign Minister ad int.

Minister Nguyen Van Hieu was accompanied by Ambassador Dinh Ba Thi.

Minister Nguyen Van Hieu thanked the French Government for creating favorable conditions to the holding of the Consultative Conference between the two South Vietnamese parties in Paris He expressed the good will of the PRG to quickly solve the internal affairs of South Viet Nam.

The Minister also informed his host of the continual and serious violations of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam by the US and the Saigon administration while they have tried their hardest to slander the PRG of the RSVN and the Government of the DRVN.

About National Reconciliation and Concord

> Unity, unity, great unity,
> Success, success, great success
>
> **HO CHI MINH**

UNDER the terms of Article 11, first paragraph, of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam. "Immediately after the cease-fire, the two South Vietnamese parties will achieve national reconciliation and concord, end hatred and enmity, prohibit all acts of reprisal and discrimination against individuals or organizations that have collaborated with one side or the other."

The Article 12 provides for consultations between the two parties "in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord, mutual respect and mutual non-elimination, to set up a National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord" which "shall have the task of promoting the two South Vietnamese parties' implementation of this Agreement" and "will organize the free and democratic general elections." It is in the same spirit that the question of the Vietnamese armed forces in South Viet Nam will be settled (Article 13).

Thus, national reconciliation and concord passes from the ethical sphere into the legal domain. It has become a rule of international law for the Paris Agreement which is international in character has been recognized and guaranteed by the formal Act of the February 26 — March 2, 1973 Paris International Conference on Viet Nam.

This shift over, made possible by the Vietnamese people's tradition of national union, is a necessity for the political settlement of the present South Viet Nam issue.

Viet Nam's tradition of national union

Geographically, Viet Nam is a stretch of land bordering on the Indochinese peninsula on the seaside. The length of its coastline measures more than 2,000 miles while its central width is in the region of 50 miles. It is a natural route for invasions and a much-coveted target for its fertile soil and abundant subsoil resources. As a matter of fact, conquering hordes from the North fell upon it many times in an attempt to occupy it or to hack through it a path to attack the Champa. The latter had itself its record of conquests. Toward the 14th century, its king, Che Bong Nga, three times sailed up the Red River, pillaged, and set fire on, Thang Long (former name of Hanoi). The Thai invaded South Viet Nam in the 18th century, then the French came from far remote West, the Japanese from North East Asia and the USA from the other shore of the Pacific.

In addition to foreign aggression always looming large, there is the threat of annual storms and floods the spates of the Red River, the Thai Binh, the Song Ca and the Song Ma.

It is a matter of life and death that the Vietnamese should unite in face of such natural calamities and human brutalities. In this context, the sense of national unity was born very early. The two oldest Vietnamese legends date back to the time of Kings Hung, two to three thousand year B.C. and deal with the successful struggle against floods and foreign aggression. The hero of the second tale is a three-year old who

miraculously grows up into a giant at the coming of the enemy and leads the whole people to drive them out.

The union of the whole nation, essential prerequisite of its survival, has been sung by all poets and folk songs. It has found political expression in an attitude both firm and wise towards the aggressors and in the greatest clemency regarding citizens who for fear or for lack of vision have been made use by the enemy.

History has it that at the end of the 3rd Mongol invasion in 1287-1288, the enemy had to leave in such a hurry that his field records were left behind, including a safe containing offers of capitulation by many dignitaries of the Court of the Trans. The Tran rulers—the King and his father bearing the title of Higher King—preferred to burn it rather than pry into it, in order to set the people's mind at peace. This unusual magnanimity even surpassed that of Augustus. Hadn't the latter learned of everything before forgiving it whereas the Tran Kings did not even want to know the names of the traitors.

In his *Writings done while on combat duty*, the great soldier-scholar Nguyen Trai wrote in the name of his king Le Loi, at the beginning of the 15th century, a letter to the Dieu Zieu Citadel authorities, where he made a thorough and human assessment of the intentions of the Vietnamese break-aways:

"The ancient sages said: Ravens always return to their nests and the dying foxes always cast their last look at their native hills. So do the beasts, would men be less feeling? You are natives of our country, you are members of our community with a millenary civilization. When the Ho dynasty failed in their obligations and the enemy invaded our land, some of you were kept at the occupant's Court, others were forced into menial functions, against your will, I know." He then threw a life-belt to those unenlightened: "If you repent, give up treason, take the right path, surrender or act as our agents in enemy organs, you will not only wipe off the stigma of past ignominy but will also be taken care of by me after our victory. I will keep my promise."

It was indeed done as said. A full and complete amnesty was granted to all the offenders so that the entire people could address themselves to national reconstruction. During the distribution of communal property, the needy families of the former collaborators were not forgotten. Economic as well as political equality was ensured to all to seal national reconciliation and concord.

In the *Advice to the Crown Prince*, written also by Nguyen Trai in the king's name, there is a remarkable recommendation to the future ruler to "cultivate the spirit of fraternity in order to preserve concord" and the hope that "the love for the people will inspire to him many acts done out of generosity."

The great tradition of national union allied to a deep comprehension of revolutionary principles in President Ho Chi Minh has spawned the famous broad unity policy which can be formulated as follows: All Vietnamese, descendants of the Lac Hong forefathers, nurture in their hearts the love for the Vietnamese fatherland subjugated and oppressed by the imperialists. By stirring up the national feeling in the indifferents, the faint-hearted, the strays, one can turn them into loyal upholders of the people's cause. By going by this principle, one can unceasingly broaden national unity. The wider the latter is, the greater the victory. Hence this political watchword in the form of two classical parallel sentences:

Unity, unity, great unity,

Success, success, great success

This line has made possible the creation of the National United Front under various forms from the anti-imperialist front and the Popular Front to the Viet Minh and the Lien Viet, which rallied all political parties and mass organizations, all ethnic groups and national creeds under the same revolutionary banner. This Front which assembled all Vietnamese around the Viet Nam Workers' Party was one of the basic factors of victory. After the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam, President Ho Chi Minh decreed a general amnesty. When the French colonialists withdrew from North Viet Nam in compliance with the said accords, tens of thousands of the Bao Dai administration army officers, soldiers, policemen and civil servants chose to remain with the revolutionary government. They received the same treatment as the former resistants. Both groups worked together, taught one another and became the present personnel of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam one of whose deputy-prime ministers was Bao Dai's viceroy in the North during the Japanese-French occupation.

President Ho Chi Minh died on September 3, 1969, but his prestigious image and broad unity policy remain for ever in every heart. His supreme message, world famous and treasured by all Vietnamese, recommends the Vietnamese people to strengthen their unity in order to bring to success their fight against US imperialism, for national salvation and carries his last wishes:

"My ultimate wish is that our whole Party and people, closely united in the struggle, build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam and make a worthy contribution to the world revolution."

That is only another more striking and stirring wording of the slogan of "great unity and great success," which is the basis and guide-line of the great policy of national reconciliation and concord.

The imperative of the political settlement of the South Viet Nam issue

The French colonialists had started the invasion of Viet Nam with an attack on the port of Da Nang in 1858, and followed up with the conquest of the six Southern provinces they eventually named Cochinchina. Their colonial war of reconquest of 1945 also began in South Viet Nam. In 1946, Governor Cedille initiated a machiavelian scheme to separate Cochinchina from Viet Nam as a different state. The word "Vietnamization" belongs to the Nixon tenure of office but in fact it dated far back to the 19th century French aggression. Governor Cedille's 1946 Cochinchinese State was the forerunner of the Bao Dai State of Viet Nam and the present Nguyen Van Thieu administration.

As a result of the imperialists' "divide and rule" tactics, a number of Vietnamese were, as Nguyen Trai put it, "kept at the occupant's Court" and "forced into menial functions," "against their will."

As regards these collaborators with the enemy, the South Viet Nam liberation movement, prompted by the great national leader Ho Chi Minh's line of broad unity, has since the outset had a clear-cut position: regard them not as enemy but as brothers momentarily strayed and not at all lost to the national community.

Right upon its formation, the NFL launched a vibrant appeal for national unity. On July 20, 1962, it declared its "readiness to cooperate on the same footing with all forces, parties, sects, groups or individuals opposing the war of aggression waged by the US imperialists on South Viet Nam, irrespective of their political inclinations, whether they fully approve or not the Front's programme, whether they reside in South Viet Nam or abroad, whether they have so far collaborated with the US imperialists to any extent or not, provided that they now object to the latter's rule, regardless of the fact that up to now, they have been political, cultural, social, professional organizations or armed units hostile to the South Vietnamese revolution or still belong to the Saigon administration and army, but eager to work for national salvation."

The policy was licked into shape in the NFL Political Platform made public in 1957, which set to the Front the task and objectives of bringing together the whole people, fighting stubbornly and foiling the US aggression, setting up a regime of broad national union and democracy, building an independent, democratic, peaceful, neutral and prosperous Viet Nam and eventually achieving national peaceful reunification. The document underlined that the factor which ensures the implementation of this programme of struggle against US aggression, for national salvation is broad national unity.

The N° 12 policy mentioned in the second part of the programme specified the following points: Reserve a good reception to Saigon army officers and soldiers and its civil servants who espouse the just cause, show leniency and give a humane treatment to the defectors and POW's.

It was in compliance with those principles that the NFL then the PRG of the RSVN, elected by the Congress of the South Vietnamese People's Representatives in June 1969, put forth the 10-point global proposal and clarifications and elaborations at the Paris Conference on Viet Nam.

To Nixon's Vietnamization of the war which aimed at viciously dividing Viet Nam and severing South Viet Nam from North Viet Nam, the whole Vietnamese people successfully opposed their policy of broad national unity and concord.

After a 4-year confrontation with a formidable US deployment of a substantial part of its military and economic potential, the actual situation in South

Viet Nam was appraised as follows by the September 9, 1972 declaration of the PRG: co-existence of two armies, of two administrations, of two zones and of 3 different political forces. Consequently, a logical and reasonable political settlement must be based on a line of national reconciliation and concord founded on the respect for the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people and for the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination, with a view to achieving such essential rights

The Paris Agreement was signed on January 27, 1973, to the great joy of the Vietnamese and of the world public, deeply interested in the signal victory of the former, considered as a great success common to all the Indochinese peoples, to all oppressed peoples. The event marked the triumph of the right over force, of international solidarity over injustice, of the nations' aspiration for independence and freedom. The resolution of the first Committee of the Brussels International Jurists' Conference on Indochina, whose extracts follow, stressed that the Paris Agreement has explicitly stipulated the respect by the US and all other countries of the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination for whose achievement Article 11 has laid down two principles of primary and basic importance: realization of national reconciliation and concord and guaranteed enjoyment of the essential democratic freedoms by the South Vietnamese. Short of adherence to those principles, the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination will not be enforced for only by themselves can their will be manifested and lead to the free choice of their political future.

National reconciliation and concord is at utter variance with Saigon terror and fascist dictatorship, under the anti-communist signboard. It calls for the release and return of all prisoners whoever they may be and particularly political prisoners, in virtue of Articles 8 and 11 of the Paris Agreement and the protocol concerning the issue. "The strict implementation of these provisions, wrote the Brussels resolution, is incumbent on the South Vietnamese parties as an imperative of national reconciliation and concord and of genuinely democratic general elections."

It also requires for the South Vietnamese the enjoyment of the democratic freedoms listed in Article 11 of the Paris Agreement, which are indispensable for stable and lasting peace, the achievement of national reconciliation and concord, organization of really free and democratic elections, in brief, the realization of the true right to self-determination of the South Vietnamese.

ON January 28, 1973, the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and the DRVN and the Central Committee of the NFL and the PRG of the RSVN stated, in two appeals, their will to fully abide by and execute the provisions of the Agreement and required that the US and Saigon parties do the same.

The latter's call laid special emphasis on the present task of the South Vietnamese: "In the spirit of national concord, let us strive to achieve the union of all in order to preserve genuine peace, independence and sovereignty, realize democratic freedoms, improve the masses' living conditions, build a peaceful, independent, democratic, and prosperous South Viet Nam and ultimately reunify the country...

Broad national unity and national concord are exalted traditions of our people. They are a consistent and clear-cut line of the NFL and PRG of the RSVN."

In contrast, the Thieu regime has many times made it clear that it will not honour its pledges. In point of fact, it has hurled thousands of large-scale attacks on South Viet Nam liberated areas. In the zone under its control, there exists no democratic freedom. No detained Vietnamese civilian personnel has been returned to the PRG to date. The fascist legislation and emergency decrees-laws are maintained. The curfew continues to be imposed in Saigon from midnight to 6 a.m.. Thieu ceaselessly clamours for the massacre of the "undesirable," i.e. patriots and peace partisans. The US leaders persistently encourage it by namely asserting that it is the only legal regime in South Viet Nam.

The US and Thieu stance clashes with national reconciliation and concord. It is a flagrant breach of the Paris Agreement and Act and poses a grave threat to peace in Indochina and the Far East.

It is necessary to alert in time world and US public opinion to such US and Thieu attitude which is nothing short of the continuation of the US involvement and aggression under another form: Vietnamization in its ultimate stage with unforeseeable tragic consequences.

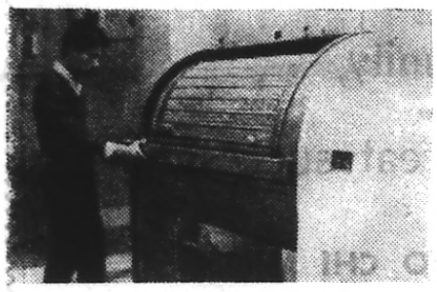
If the Saigon party and its Washington supporters really have peace at heart instead of being bent on undermining international arrangements solemnly adhered to, they must abstain from any act which may harm Viet Nam's national reconciliation and concord, implement the stipulations of the Agreement in this spirit and cooperate in settling the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord, which is an obligation not as a means but as an

end of all signatories to the Agreement. They must more particularly ensure democratic freedoms, including freedom of the press, freedom of meeting and political activity in order to make it possible for the third force—the majority of the population of Saigon-controlled zone according to a letter from General Duong Van Minh and the International Conference on Viet Nam—to organize itself openly and make its indispensable contribution to national reconciliation and concord.

The latter increasingly proves to be an imperative of the political settlement of the Viet Nam issue. The position of each party toward it is the gauge of its good faith regarding the full and strict implementation of the Paris Agreement.

XUAN KHANH

Hanoi Engineering Branch's machine to produce silicate bricks



the DRVN in brief

Rebuilding Hon Gai town

Workers, cadres and the local people at Hon Gai are busy removing rubble, levelling the ground, repairing roads in preparation for the rebuilding of the town and make good the aftermaths of US aggression. Within a short time they were able to build tens of thousands of square yards of housing, and laying tens of thousands of meters of electric wire and pipes.

Millions of cubic meters of earth removed

9 million workdays were devoted by Nghe An province to the removing of more than 4 million cubic meters of earth to build rural roads, bridges and culverts. Nearly 1,900 miles of rural roads and 1.5 miles of bridges have been either repaired or built.

Repairing and building roads and bridges in national minority areas

1,200 miles of roads, hundreds of bridges and culverts have been repaired or built in Son La province. The building of roads linking villages and hamlets, those leading to mountainous areas and bridges spanning over small brooks has been considerably pushed up, which contributes to the improvement of living conditions in those national minority areas.

Patriotic catholics' role in the new period

Priests representing the catholic community all over North Viet Nam recently held an enlarged session to celebrate the big victory of the nation and the 18th founding anniversary of the Liaison Committee of Patriotic and Peace loving Vietnamese Catholics. The gathering called on priests and believers throughout the North to heighten their patriotism and religious faith, take an active part in economic rehabilitation and development, in the consolidation of national defense, liquidation of poverty and backwardness, and to support their Southern co-believers' struggle for peace and national concord.

New strains of sugar cane

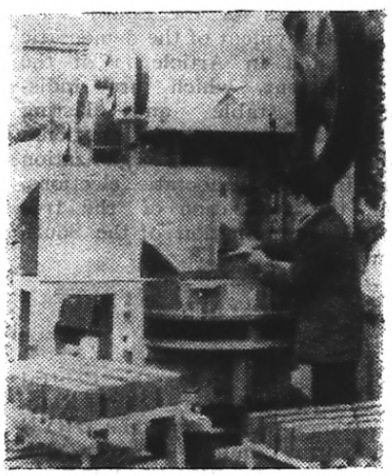
The Institute of Industrial Researches has developed three new species of sugar canes, which are all easy to grow and show strong resistance to storms. They moreover can be easily machine-planted. Used in the *Van Diem* Sugar Refinery, they would save the State millions of *dong* each year.

More production and the people's consumption

In the past few years, the Service of Geo-Hydrology has made done a good job in surveying, drawing and producing maps showing underground sources of water which can give millions of tons of water everyday for production and the people's consumption while providing facilities for the forthcoming large-scale economic construction.

Founding anniversary of the Cinema Service

The Cinema Service has celebrated with due solemnity the 20th anniversary of the day when President Ho Chi Minh signed its founding decree. On this occasion, a Viet Nam Film Festival was held and prizes were awarded to various works.



Washing machines for hospitals, restaurants and living quarters

DA NANG

DA NANG welcomed peace with unusual enthusiasm. Before the signing of the Paris Agreement people had had to live under a most oppressive rule. Troops were totally confined in barracks. Civil servants had to be present at their offices round the clock. During the curfew, police and military police patrolled throughout the city. All its exits and entrances were heavily guarded, and check points established at a few hundred meters' interval, apart from plain-clothes police on the beat everywhere.

Day and night security forces irrupted into schools and colleges to forced them to close down obviously to prevent pupils and students from welcoming the impending peace accord. They even made searches in temples and pagodas, arrested monks and nuns or forbade them to hold peace prayers. A member of the Executive Committee of the pro-governmental Democratic Party went so far as to declare, "The night mantle of peace has descended on our heads." In the two days following the signing of the Paris Agreement, almost 600 patriots were apprehended, and hundreds of others threatened with the same fate.

All those measures, however, were unable to bar the townsfolk from exhibiting joy and pride at the news of an event they considered a victory of the entire nation. They poured into the streets or massed at public squares, passing on to one another the text of the Paris Accord. They discussed with one another about what to be done in peace time.

S.T., a teacher, had tears in his eyes while listening to *Radio Liberation* broadcasting the appeal of the NFL Central Committee and the PRG. A veteran intellectual, he had lived long years of humiliation as a citizen of a country deprived of its independence and freedom. At times, after the mass landing of American troops in Da Nang, S.T., with a broken heart, thought that his fatherland could hardly face up to such a brutal force. Then news spread of success after success scored by liberation fighters, and he came to realize that he was not right. That day of late January, he confided to a friend: "Never in my life have I been so proud as in these days. I am happy because the Vietnamese nation has thrown off for ever the foreign aggressors' yoke."

A large number of Da Nang people are contemplating going to live in the liberated zone. Natives of Dien Ban, Dai Loc and Duy Xuyen districts, Quang Tri province, they had fled their home villages to avoid American bombings. Many, with members of their families in the Saigon army, had called on them in one way or another to leave its ranks and turn a new leaf. Officers and men openly listened to the *Voice of Viet Nam* (Hanoi) and *Radio Liberation*, and lively discussed over the NFL and PRG policy of national reconciliation and concord.

Looking at a public address system car from which an agent read again and again Saigon's sabre-rattling pronouncements through a megaphone, a junior lieutenant told his friend in a café:

"The NFL and PRG's language is dignified and convincing. As for the President's (Thieu's), it's hazy and arrogant. On such an occasion as Tet, insults over the radio simply hurt everyone's ears."

"Let him shout" after a pause he went on: "It's peace now, I'll throw my uniform back to him."

Peace, independence, democracy, national concord — all that had brought joy to everyone in Da Nang. Every one nevertheless was aware of the great difficulties lying ahead. Having witnessed an incursion by mercenaries against a liberated village in the neighbourhood of the city, a young man said with frustration: "Inside the town they are intensifying arrests and terror. Outside they are carrying on the war. We should put up a vigorous fight to stop all their attempts to sabotage the peace agreement. Otherwise there won't be any lasting peace."

P.V.

MAJOR RESERVOIR COMPLETED

The Cam Son reservoir in Lang Son province, the second largest artificial lake in North Viet Nam (after the Thac Ba lake in Yen Bai) has been completed and will soon be officially inaugurated.

This reservoir with a storing capacity of 300 million cubic metres, is built on the Hoa river, a tributary of the Thuong river, about one hundred kilometres northeast of Hanoi.

It will serve as a regulator for the waters in these two rivers to enable the permanent irrigation of some 40,000 hectares of cultivated land in the six northern districts of Ha Bac province and the suburban areas of Bac Giang town.

Water from the Cam Son reservoir will also cater for the Steel and Iron Complex in Thai Nguyen capital of Bac Thai province, and other industrial interprises in the surrounding of Bac Giang.

The Cam Son reservoir will also be used as a source of hydro-power and a fish rearing centre.

Here and There

The Vicious Circle

On March 15, 1973, at a press conference in Washington, President Nixon reiterated US leading circles' slanderous charge of DRVN "infiltration" into South Viet Nam and stated that this "violation of the cease-fire" might bring about consequences as "US actions in the last four years." *(UPI, AFP)*

Take it easy, if you don't mind. The trick is a bit shopworn. No one is left in doubt as to who has been violating the Paris Agreement. World as well as Vietnamese opinion has several times exposed US and Saigon breaches of the accord. How can Washington pass the buck? Moreover, Mr Nixon's very threats are a flagrant infringement of Article 2 of the Agreement which stipulates the "cessation of all military activities of all US ground, air and naval forces, wherever they may come from, against the DRVN" and "the lasting and unlimited" character of this cessation.

What about the last term of office of Mr Nixon? The US had made the miscalculations we all know, which were brought to an end by the Paris Agreement. And the return by the DRVN of captured US military personnel has not been completed. One should at least give the *Hanoi-Hilton* the time to clean up its rooms before thinking of peopling them again.

About a Ceremony

On March 15, 1973, reported *AFP* at the General Headquarters of the US troops in Saigon, the US infantry offically wound up its 11 years old intervention in South Viet Nam with a ceremony during which its colours were lowered and a mass for US past mistakes.

General Morgan Roseborough its commander, folded up himself the Stars and Stripes in the presence of General Weyand C.i.C of the US troops in Saigon.

So what should come did come at long last. One is tempted to say "Farewell." But we are well aware that it was only the termination of an open intervention. An officious one is going on under civilian guise.

Morgan marked the occasion with a solemn comment: We can rightly be proud of the role played by the US soldiers here!

But only a few hours after this function, Thomas Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff made a rather different declaration in Nashville (Tennessee): Never had US youth been thrown into a war which triggered so many criticisms at home as well as in Viet Nam. (*AP*, March 15)

HUONG NAM

It will be wiser for the Vientiane administration to implement the Agreement scrupulously

THE signed Agreement on Restoring Peace and Achieving National Concord in Laos, which records an unprecedented victory of the entire people of Laos and also of the liberation forces on the Indochinese peninsula in their struggle against US aggression, and which marks a new step forward on the road to peace in this area, has been warmly welcomed by all of progressive mankind. On the other hand, it means an undeniable heavy setback of US imperialism and the reactionary forces.

Since then, developments in the Lao situation have been causing great concern among the world's peoples. The most salient point of the situation is that US imperialism and the Vientiane administration, not willing to take it lying down, are kicking and screaming in a bid to secure some gains which they were not able to achieve in the past 9 years. The correct stand and goodwill of the Lao Patriotic Front, clearly manifested in its scrupulous implementation of the Agreement, have been met by the US and the Vientiane side with a series of systematic violations of the military provisions of the Agreement.

The Vientiane side has not ordered its armed forces to observe a complete cease-fire in-place on the whole territory of Laos as from 12:00 hours March 22, 1973, as stipulated by the Agreement. Sisouk Na Champassak, representative of Prince Souvanna Phouma at the Vientiane Defence Ministry, even made it plain that the Vientiane side intended to sabotage peace. "There is a ceasefire, but there is no peace yet, and army must continue fulfilling its tasks," he said.

More serious still, on February 23, 1973, one day after the ceasefire came into force, nobody other than Prince Phouma called in US aircraft, including B.52's, to bomb the Lao territory once again, causing further devastation to this country and more mourning and suffering to its people. Meanwhile, nibbling operations against the liberated zones were repeatedly conducted in both Northern and Southern Laos by Vientiane troops and Thai mercenaries who occupied some areas under the control of the patriotic forces. According to a report made public on March 17, 1973 by the Supreme Command of the Lao People's Liberation Army, "within the 15 days after the Agreement took effect, that is from 12:00 hours February 22, 1973 to March 8, 1973, the US side and the Vientiane administration violated the ceasefire no less than 190 times. During this period, they ordered 337 sorties of aircraft of all types, to bomb and strafe the liberated areas, ordered 1,082 sorties of spy planes, and 70 times mustered troops to nibble at the liberated areas."

At the meetings between the two sides to discuss political and military questions and the signing of protocols for implementing the Agreement, the Vientiane side purposely resorted to dilatory tactics, and repeatedly put forward fallacious arguments aimed at sidetracking public opinion, and smokescreening their own violations of the Agreement. The 30-day time limit has now expired, yet the question of forming a Provisional Coalition Government and a Political Consultative Council to carry out the provisions reached between the two sides as stipulated by Article 6 of the Vientiane Agreement, has not yet yielded any concrete result.

Looking back on the situation one month after the signing of the Agreement on Restoring Peace and Achieving National Concord in Laos, any observer can see that all over the Lao territory not a day has passed without gunshots being fired by Vientiane troops and Thai mercenaries in their repeated attacks on the patriotic forces. The Lao soil continues being ravaged by American bombs and shells. The Lao people continue sustaining serious losses in lives and property. On whom does the responsibility for all this rest, if not on the US imperialists and the Vientiane reactionary rulers ?

Obviously in their stalemate, failing in their attempt to destroy the Lao patriotic forces and taken under the crossfire of progressive opinion around the world, the United States had to direct the Vientiane administration to sign the said Agreement. However, with its aggressive nature, the US still does not give up its colonialist design against Laos, while the Vientiane administration, with its nature as dollar-fed hangers-on, is clinging to the enormous interests it has piled up in serving the US.

Nevertheless, it is equally clear that however frenziedly they squirm the US imperialists and the Vientiane side cannot turn the tide. Under the leadership of the Lao Patriotic Front, the aspiration for peace, independence, democracy and national concord has taken so deep roots among the Lao people. Both the position and forces of the Lao patriotic forces are now more powerful and steady than ever before.

If the Vientiane side is still wise enough to keep its train rolling on the right tracks, then it should join the Lao Patriotic Front in scrupulously and thoroughly implementing the Agreement it has signed. With the spirit of National Concord of the Lao nation, with the good faith of the Lao Patriotic Front, the Vientiane side will surely have the opportunity to strive, together with the Lao people, for a peaceful, independent, democratic, neutral, unified and prosperous Laos, as called for in the Programme of the Lao Patriotic Front.

On the contrary, if it persists in its role as a lackey of US imperialism by continuing to violate the Agreement it has signed, then its true colours will be exposed, and its losses will be greater.

DAI LIEN

The plea of the attackers of the Lao liberated area Southern Laos 1971 : Saigon mercenaries' bodies

in brief

o On March 12, in Stockholm, a delegation of representatives of the Swedish Left-wing Communist Party, the Left-wing Women's Union, the Social-Democratic Youth Union, the NFL Group and the Committee of US Military Deserters, called at the US Embassy with a protest against US condoning the Saigon administration in serious violations of the Peace Agreement on Viet Nam. The petition pointed out that the United States must bear full responsibility for such offences.

o In response to the world people's movement to grant continued and increased aid to the Vietnamese to heal their wounds of war, students from Asia, Africa, Cuba and Latin America attending the Bulgarian Institute of Social Sciences organized a fund-raising and blood-campaign.

On March 14, 1973, the directorship of the Institute handed over 610 leva and each student donated 350 gr of blood in the first drive of the movement.

o On March 16, in Paris, 50 French organizations militating for peace in Indochina, including the Peace Movement, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the General Confederation of Labour, the French Democratic Labour Federation, the National Federation of Teachers, etc. issued a statement against Nixon's threats to use force against Viet Nam. "The US government must be blamed for the present situation," the document said, "as it is committing their B.52s to bombing raids on Laos and Cambodia and condoning Thieu's preventing the implementation of the provisions of the Agreement in South Viet Nam, especially those on free activities of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission and the International Commission, the return of hundreds of thousands of detained political activists whose lives are being endangered."

The statement urged that the US and the Saigon administration strictly abide by the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, and tressed "French public opinion will not tolerate the horrific tragedy originating from the non-implementation of the 1954 Geneva Agreement, to repeat itself to the detriment of the peoples in Indochina."

o The Tokyo Centre of the Japanese Committee in support of the Vietnamese people decided to observe an "Action Week" from March 22 to 28 to show support for, and solidarity with, the Vietnamese and Indochinese peoples.

March 28 will be regarded as an "Action Day" marking the 60th day following the signing of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam.

During that week, the Tokyo Centre will carry out propaganda activities and exhort the Japanese people to give increased support and set on foot collections in favour of the Vietnamese people. It will also protest against the US and Saigon administration's violations of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and demand the immediate and unconditional release of detained South Vietnamese patriots.

For a stable and lasting peace...

(Continued from page 1)

Question: What do you think the world peoples should do to help preserve peace in Viet Nam and in this area?

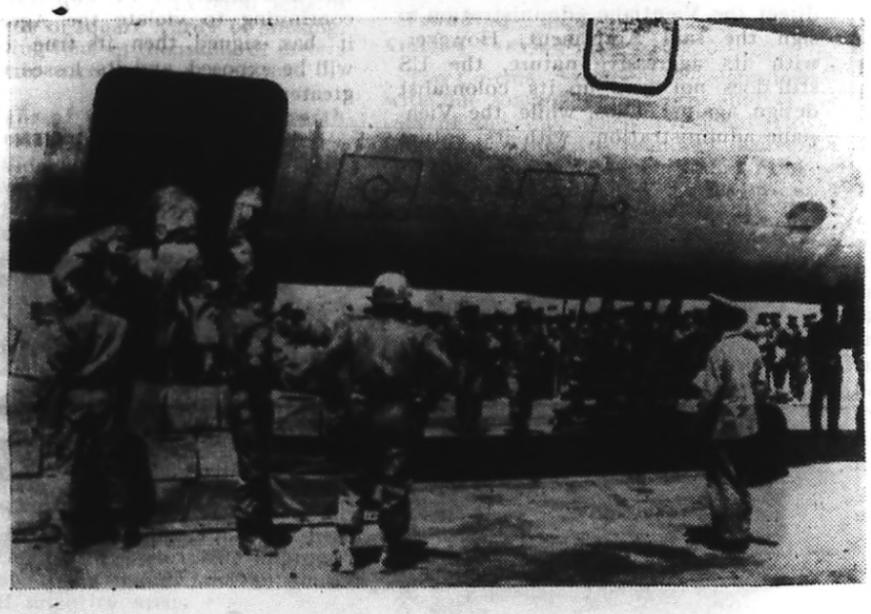
Answer: We believe that the preservation of peace in Viet Nam is not only the primary task of the Vietnamese but also of all peoples, because it is an active contribution to the achievement of peace in Indochina, Southeast Asia and the world.

The peace just won in Viet Nam must be safeguarded and consolitated in order to stave off all threats of a rekindled war. We are determined not to let reactionary and trigger-happy forces sabotage a valuable prize gained by the Vietnamese people with the sympathy and support of progressive mankind and at the cost of incredible hardships and sacrifices.

We avail ourselves of this opportunity to convey, on behalf of South Viet Nam people, NFL and PRG, our most heartfelt thanks to our friends all over the world and to US progressives as well, for their considerable support and assistance to our fight for peace, independence and freedom.

...gone with the wind

Though American troops have to be repatriated, US imperialism is still striving to impose its neo-colonialist regime over South Viet Nam. Respect for Viet Nam independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, and consideration for the South Vietnamese right to self-determination means for the US a definite end to its involvement and intervention. However, it has not been acting in such a course. In fresh forms, it wants to carry out old machinations. As in the past, such a policy can only lead to an impass and a dilemna. Now the situation is entirely different. In the present juncture, to persist in out-dated manoeuvres is to meet with bigger difficulties and heavier setbacks. The US should not fall again in the old track.



- *For South Korean mercenaries: time to get off from South Viet Nam*
- *For US ground troops: time to pull down the* Stars and Stripes

Almost meaningful word has been coined by the US expeditionary troops. It opens, winds up and supplies the content of any conversation and discussion of theirs. Always in bold type, it fills the pages of newspapers meant for American servicemen. It is used now as a noun, now as a verb.

That word is *DEROS*, **short for** *Date of expected return from over seas*. **The GI's in Viet Nam long for repatriation so eagerly that they reckon the road sections they traverse and the time they spend here not in terms of months or weeks but seconds. For instance, from Cu Chi to Orleans it takes them over 31 million and a half seconds, each of them being carefully measured by international standards.**

The *Stars and Stripes*, **the paper of the US forces in the Pacific wrote: From the moment he gets out of his plane at Tan Son Nhut, Cam Ranh or Bien Hoa, the GI's will forwith engage in a 12-month — 365-days — *DEROS* race. If he is lucky enough, the same day the year after, he will return by the same plane.**

Right after his arrival in embattled Viet Nam where "each footstep may be the last one" in his life, the US soldiers starts a count down: 364 (days), 363, 362, 361 and so on as though a prey to an incessant obsession. Everyday some of his mates wear the number of days on their caps, bullet-proof jackets or rifle butts.

"DEROS"

It happened that the back of one such jacket wore this inscription: "I have less than 100 days left. Don't aim at me. My mother can't live without me." Usually during his first or second week in Viet Nam the GI dreads gazing at the calendar; now and then he just casts a glimpse at it like the traveller afraid of looking at the milestones, for the oftener he does the more impatient he grows.

As a rule, GI's conversations begin like this: "After *DEROS*, **when I'm back home...," or "When** *DEROSING* **I'll be already far away from here..." Above all they think about the days before their arrival in Viet Nam and after** *DEROS*. **The** *Stars and Stripes* **says that the present brings them no promise at all, and that having spent a few weeks in this country they live either with the past or the future. Therefore, the news that the Paris Agreement provided for the total US withdrawal from Viet Nam was hailed with exuberant joy by the American soldier. Private Murray hugged his friend and burst into tears, stammering, "My God! it's not too soon indeed! Not too soon!" Second lieutenant Livingstone hurriedly tore a piece of paper from his diary and wrote out a cable to his wife: "So, thank God, I'll be still alive and back again with you. Oodles of love!" Somewhere, another GI mimicked an air stewardess: "Attention please, our plane is nearing the Californian coast that you can see in the distance at the same time as the sun rising from behind Rockey Mountains." With tears in his eyes and trembling hands, captain Conner lighted his cigarette and began smoking with a forced smile. He drew long puffs as he looked upward at the sky — the Vietnamese sky — then jade-blue, cloudless, astonishingly beautiful.**

Normally all US expeditionary troops should have readily *DEROSED* **from South Viet Nam. Regrettably, however, American warlike and aggressive forces have not looked at their in the light of the GI's** *DEROS* **mania. They are still sticking to their ill-fated schemes. They had better** *DEROS* **themselves if they want to stave off heavier setbacks and graver difficulties.**

SOUTH VIET NAM — CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION